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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Lin Wang entitled "Television News Violence and Children's Fear Reaction." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Child and Family Studies.

Greer Fox, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Mary Jane Moran, Jo Lynn Cunningham

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Acceptance for the Council:

Anne Mayhew

Vice Chancellor and
Dean of Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

TELEVISION NEWS VIOLENCE
AND CHILDREN'S FEAR REACTION

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Lin Wang
December 2005

ABSTRACT

Do parents perceive that exposure to violence on television news programs is a problem for their young children? Although considerable research has shown that media violence in other forms (cartoons, movies, television entertainment programs) has several negative effects on children, almost no research or policy attention has been given to children's exposure to violent events in television news broadcasts. The purpose of this study was to examine the rates of 4-5 years old children's exposure and fear reaction to television news violence as it relates to several ecological variables, including parental gender, race, education level, household income, family structure and family composition, parents' concern and parental behavior regarding television news violence. General perceptions of television news violence and observations of their children's exposure and fear reaction to television news were collected from 27 parents from 4 childcare centers in Knoxville.

This project indicates that an ecological approach is a feasible way to examine children's television news consumption and their reactions. The findings revealed that television news violence has already become an issue about which some parents express general concern. However, the rates of 4-5 year old children's exposure to television news and their fear reactions are actually not high. In addition to exploring parental attitudes about and actions in regards to television news viewing by their young children, a second question explored the parents' comparison between television news and children's cartoons in term of media violence. On one hand,

parents seemed to believe that television news is more concerned about violence in television news than in children's cartoons; on the other hand, parents' actual limitation of children's exposure to these two programs was almost the same, and fewer parents reported their child experienced fear to television news than to children's cartoons.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a 1994 public address, former First Lady Hillary Clinton argued that exposure to violence depicted in television news may have negative emotional and psychological effects on children and children cannot protect themselves from such violent content (Smith, 1994). Her statements reflected the increasing concern about children's exposure to television news in our society. With more and more television channels that broadcast news around the clock and "breaking news stories" that interrupt other television programming, adults and children of all ages are surrounded by television news.

In past decades television news programs have become increasingly violent (Walma van der Molen, 2002), dominated by stories about crime, violence, and suffering (Smith & Wilson, 2002). The reason for this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is a prevailing logic that television is primarily an entertainment medium, and the entertainment value of violent news stories fits the criterion for selecting television news. As an example, one leading philosophy in television news programs is "if it bleeds, it leads", which has resulted in growing violent content in such programs. In light of this tendency, parents, educators, and politicians are expressing expanding concerns about children's exposure to television news. The concern herewith is not refraining television news from reporting news events that involve violence, but how to alleviate its potential negative effect on

viewers, especially child viewers.

Decades of efforts in studying the effect of media violence have led to a conspicuous consensus in the research community that media violence can have harmful effects (Johnson, 1996). By the time they reach age 18, American children will have seen 16,000 simulated murders and 200,000 acts of violence (American Psychiatric Association, 1998). Research has shown that media violence can have several negative associative effects on children, which include seeing violence as an effective way of solving conflicts, developing desensitization towards violence in real life, viewing the world as a violent and mean place, and germinating a greater tendency for violent and aggressive behavior later in life (Muscari, 2002). Media violence has become one important reason for the public to analyze childhood violence, such as school shootings.

Fear evoked by media violence is not so noticeable as aggressive and antisocial behaviors that result from exposure to media violence, but it does not mean that there is reason to ignore it. It is true that fear, the most universal of human experiences, can make people act cautiously with foresight and careful weighing of hazards, yet unnecessary or unwarranted fear can be harmful. When we study the child viewers of the television news, the potential of television news to evoke fear requires more consideration. During this period, children's development is immature in terms of emotion, psychology and language. As a result, young children may be bothered by the fear begotten by exposure to television news, or even worse, they may run into

worry without the ability to be aware that fear is the cause of their unhappiness. Although fears belong to normal child development, in excess they may block exploration with the world (Lahikainen, Kirmanen, & Taimalu, 2003). More seriously, a considerable number of childhood fears qualify for an (subclinical) anxiety disorder (Muris, Merckelbach, Mayer, & Prins, 2000).

One common perception is that television for children means cartoon and special entertainment programs for children. However, researchers have discovered that a significant proportion of children of the U.S. watch television news with apparent regularity (Drew & Reeves, 1980; Children Now, 1994). Elementary school children of all ages, or even younger children, watch some type of news programming during the week (Drew & Reeves, 1980; Egan, 1978). For example, Walma van der Molen (2004) pointed out that many 3- to 8-year-olds regularly watch television news; and Atkin (1978) found that two thirds of the kindergarten through fifth graders he interviewed watched television news “sometimes” or “almost every day”. Actually, for American children between 2 and 11 years old, the number of those who watch the evening network news on a given day is roughly half a million (Stipp, 1995), and the number of viewers of network news in an average minute is the same (Cantor and Nathanson, 1996). Even if children choose not to watch the news themselves, they may still be confronted with it when their parents are watching (Molen, Valkenburg, & Peeters, 2002). Combined with the fact that most television news programs are clearly not intended for a child audience, these

findings stressed the necessity to explore the effect of television news on children.

Keeping this worry in mind, this thesis focuses on child viewers' fear reaction to violent television news.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Television News

Research on the effects of media has been a fertile area for study over the past five decades (Gentile, Walsh, 2002). One area focuses on the effect of exposure to mass media violence on viewers. Mass media, in current society, could be any form of communication to which large numbers of people have ready access—motion pictures, TV, books, magazines, newspaper, popular music, etc. Television news, the subject this paper is exploring, is one of the primary contents of TV media. Actually television news program has developed to such an extent that it now includes a variety of different genres, such as newsmagazines, news-interview shows, tabloid news shows, and the like. A recent trend of news programming is that the once-clear distinction between “entertainment” and news programming has blurred (National Television Violence Study , 1997). For the purpose of this paper, only regularly scheduled news programs (e.g., ABC World News Tonight) are discussed.

Violence

As for violence, there is no single commonly accepted definition that has been used in the research literature; that is, the elements of the definition of violence varied among different researchers (National Television Violence Study, 1997). “The broader the definition, the greater the number of violent behaviors that will be indicated by research” (National Television Violence Study, 1997). Some definitions

are quoted as follow:

- The overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon) against self or other, compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually hurting or killing (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980)
- Behavior that inflicts harm, either physically or psychologically, including explicit or implicit threats and nonverbal behavior (Williams, Zabrack & Joy, 1982)
- Besides the threat, actual use, or physically harmful consequences of violent behavior that is committed by individuals and that is deliberately intended to inflict harm on animate beings, the notion of violence should also include: 1) the emotionally harmful consequences of violence; 2) all accidents and natural disasters; 3) any violence that is related to political or economic structure, for which no individual perpetrator can be discerned (e. g., war and hunger); 4) violence directed at inanimate objects or property (e. g., vandalism, plundering) (Walma van der Molen, 2004).

In this paper, the broader conception of violence advocated by Walma van der Molen is adopted because research had shown that children could be seriously affected by many kinds of violence, like interpersonal physical conflict, accident, natural disaster, the emotional results of violence, wars, all of which are included in

television news programs (e.g., John, Dale, Marites, and Aletha, 1989; Smith, and Willson, 2000; Smith, and Wilson, 2002). Concretely, “violence” refers here to news stories about physical aggression, wars, accidents and natural disasters, and the physical and emotional consequences.

Outcomes of Media Violence

At least three primary types of harmful effects of television violence have been consistently documented by the vast majority of studies, and have also been recognized by many governmental and professional organizations, such as American Medical Association, National Academy of Science, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (National Television Violence Study, 1997). Respectively, the three types of harmful effects are: 1) facilitating aggressive and antisocial behavior; 2) desensitizing viewers to future violence; and 3) increasing viewers’ fear that they are living in a mean and dangerous world.

Given the unique developmental characteristics of children, it has been noticed that exposure to television violence in young ages would have harmful lifelong consequences (National television violence study, 1997). Actually, hundreds of studies have investigated such impact on children (Paik and Comstock, 1994). As early as 1982, National Institute of Mental Health, one of the government’s leading public health agencies, concluded in its report that television violence could cause harmful effects even on preschoolers. Since then, the relationship between exposure to media violence and children’s physical and mental health problems has been

supported by more than 3500 research studies (Chatfield, 2002).

The relationship between media violence and children's aggressive behavior has drawn the majority of attention. Whether using laboratory simulations, population-based observations, or using longitudinal analysis, the relationship between exposure to violent television programming and children's aggressive behaviors has been supported (Cheng, et al., 2004). Actually some experts have even suggested that the evidence linking media violence to aggressive behavior is stronger than the evidence linking smoking to lung cancer (Bushman, & Huesmann, 2001).

A second focus of research has been on desensitization to violence. As a major outcome of exposure to media violence, desensitization means the attenuation or elimination of cognitive, emotional, and ultimately, behavioral responses to a stimulus (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, Baumgardner, 2003). It was known decades ago that desensitization could happen after repeated exposure to media violence. For example, Ronald Drabman and Margaret Thomas conducted a series of four controlled experiments in the mid-1970s and found that media violence made children more tolerant of the aggressive behaviors of others (Drabman & Thomas, 1974a, 1974b, 1976; Thomas & Drabman, 1975). And when some researchers replicated Drabman and Thomas classic experiments in 1990s, it was found that their findings still operated (Molitor, Fred; Hirsch, Kenneth William, 1994).

Besides aggressive behavior and desensitization, fear reaction is another negative effect on viewers, including child viewers. "Fear" is a term that is fraught

with multiple meanings. According to Webster's dictionary, fear is "an unpleasant feeling of anxiety or apprehension caused by the presence or anticipation of danger." Acting as the specific stimulus, the "danger" may be either real or imaginary. Fear reaction to television violence normally refers to a general fear of crime or victimization, probably appearing as fear of walking alone at night, greater estimations of the prevalence of violence and greater overall fear of crime (Gerbner & Gross, 1976); or more transitory reactions such as immediate emotional fright.

When speaking of fear response to media violence, it is necessary to mention cultivation theory because it offers a compelling account of why news programming in particular would affect viewers. Initially developed by George Gerbner, cultivation theory, arising from the concern for the potentially negative effect of violent television programs, attempts to conceptualize the role of television in our lives. Basically, cultivation theory hypothesizes that cumulative television watching will be associated with a tendency to hold conceptions of a reality that are congruent with the most consistent and pervasive images and values presented in television dramas (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). According to Gerbner, television is an increasingly unitizing cultural force that is expressed and enacted through mythology, religion, legends, education, art, science, laws, fairy tales and politics. Such television culture results in differences between heavy television viewers and light viewers in terms of their perceptions of social reality (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999).

Since the bulk of evidence indicates that violence is exaggerated in the world of

television (Lowry, Nio, & Leitner, 2003), cultivation theory would lead us to expect that relative to light viewers, heavy viewers of television violence might have more serious concerns about safety of the real world. Cultivation theory has been supported by some research. For example, Gebotys, Roberts, and DasGupta (1988) found a significant positive relationship between media use and perceptions of crime seriousness.

As one part of television culture, television news could cultivate more intense feelings of fear in its high-frequency viewers. For many people, television news is the main source of information, and only few people can experience news by themselves. Television, then, becomes the functional equivalent of personal experience (Comstock, 1978; Comstock & Cobbey, 1978). When such pseudo-experience infiltrates a viewer's memory, it will provide instances in a viewer's memory on which generalizations and judgments of reality will be made. If television news tends to exaggerate violence, individuals who are exposed to a greater amount of crime news or who pay greater attention to televised news about crime are more likely to show concern of being a crime victim and are more concerned about protecting themselves from being victimized (Einsiedel, Salomone, and Schneider 1984; O'Keefe and Reid-Nash, 1987). Actually, television news has been accused of generating undue fear among viewers (see Gordon & Heath, 1991; Jaehnig, Weaver, & Fico, 1981). The "mean world syndrome" described by Gerbner and his colleagues (1994) vividly depicted the fear of the world caused by exposure

to television violence. People “come to view the world as more violent and more dominated by criminal concerns than it really is. As a result, such persons will tend to have inaccurate perceptions about the amount and kinds of crimes committed in the real world, to inaccurately estimate the number of persons engaged in law enforcement, to trust others less, to become alienated, and to experience an unwarranted amount of generalized fear” (Hughes, 1980).

Contemporary Programming

What is the status of violent television news programs? Television news has been flooded with violent content ranging from family violence to tragedies, from crime fighting to wars (Walma van der Molen, 2004). It should not be a surprise to be told by a television viewer that crime was the number one topic on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening newscasts during the 1990s (Center for Media and Public Affairs, July-August 2000). Actually the “if it bleeds, it leads” philosophy fits for all news programs. The only difference lies in that locally oriented programs put more emphasis on crime, and the more nationally oriented programs tend to emphasize war and protests (Johnson, 1996).

According to National Television Violence Study (1997), the degree of the effects of television violence depends mainly on the context within which violence is portrayed; in other words, violence can have different meanings depending upon how it is presented within a television program. So it is interesting to examine how television news programs portray violence. First, the most notable character of

television news is its inherently realistic nature. And realistic portrayals of violence are believed to relate to immediate fright reactions and fear of the world as a scary place (Walma van der Molen, 2004). Secondly, for acting as the “mirror of the reality”, television news reports violent events completely in term of the varieties of violence. Furthermore, in television news, crime stories not only are overreported, but also “are often episodic, ahistorical accounts that rely on stereotyped assumptions and fail to provide context or explanation. Instead of communicating substantive information that aids in understanding, television news often focused on emotional and tragic elements that tend to inflame and even obscure what is taking place” (Johnson, 1996). In the end, it is not difficult to notice that television news is becoming increasingly sensational and graphic (Walma van der Molen, 2004). These facts imply that television news has gradually become instilled with the violent content that originally had been associated with entertainment shows.

Children’s Fear Reaction to Television News

Evidence is accumulating that fears aroused by the violent content of television news are very common in children. Some studies investigated children’s reactions to specific events. For example, according to Cantor, Mares, and Oliver (1993), 25% of a random sample of parents spontaneously mentioned the Gulf War as a televised event that had frightened their child. In response to a follow-up that specifically asked about TV coverage of the war, an additional 20% of the sample answered that it had frightened their child, bringing the total percentage of children reportedly

upset by TV coverage of the war to 45%.

Apart from these investigations, several studies have examined children's fright reactions to regular daily news. Some studies gathered data from parents. According to Cantor and Sparks (1984), the result of their mail survey of parents of children in preschool, first grade, and fourth grade conducted showed that television news was among the top 10 sources that make children frightened. And Cantor and Nathanson (1996) conducted a telephone survey of parents of children in kindergarten, second, fourth, and sixth grades about children's television viewing. The result revealed that a substantial proportion (43%) of children had been noted to experience fright reactions to television news.

Some studies gathered data from children themselves. Wilson and Smith (1995) found that over three fourths of the children they interviewed reported that television news was 'scary'. Moreover, a majority (52%) could recall a specific story they had seen on television news that had frightened them in the past. In their later research, it was found that the proximity of a crime story (local vs. nonlocal) had an impact on children's fright reactions (Smith & Wilson, 2000). Smith and Wilson (2002) interviewed a total of 125 children from two grade levels (K-3rd vs 4th –6th) and found that repeated exposure to television news affected children's perceptions of how much crime occurs in distant communities. Some study focusing on children in other countries obtained similar conclusions. For example, Lahikainen, Kirmanen, Kraav, and Taimalu (2003) found out that fears aroused by television news are very

common in early childhood in Estonia and Finland.

Furthermore, a number of developmental effects have been observed in children's emotional reactions to violent television news. For example, the study by Cantor and Nathanson (1996) suggested that age is an important moderator in children's fear responses to everyday news programs. According to developmental theories, there are differences in the ways in which children perceive, interpret, and comprehend stimuli, and these differences should have implications for children's emotional responses to what they see and hear. This means that children at different levels of cognitive development would exhibit different emotional responses to the same media content. As far as television news is concerned, the same violent news story should elicit fear to a different extent from child viewers based on their different levels of ability of understanding of the world and their place in it (Slee & Cross, 1989). For example, news reporting about natural disasters can engender fear more often in younger child viewers than older child viewers, and the latter often expresses fear of some abstract threat, such as potential nuclear wars (Carton and Nathanson, 1996; Smith and Wilson, 2002).

Although the research on older children is informative, it tells us very little about young viewers' fear reactions to television news violence (TVNV). Despite an exhaustive review of the literature, no studies were found in which younger children were treated as the main research participants of this kind of studies. Participation of preschoolers and even younger children are an equally pertinent group for reference

showing developmental trends of children's fear. Although older children are more likely to watch television news (Atkin, 1978; Egan, 1978) and to exhibit more comprehension of television news (Smith & Wilson, 2002), and although it seems that fear induced by news stories increased with age (Cantor & Nathanson, 1996; Cantor, 2000), it is not yet time to reach the conclusion that younger children experience less fear exposure to violent television news. For example, Hoffner and Haefner (1994) found out that a negative relationship between ages and concern for personal safety existed when they conducted a study of American children's reactions to the Gulf War. Also, a contradictory result has been obtained from a child survey about their fear to television news (Walma van der Molen, Valkenvurg, & Peeters, 2002). One possible reason is that television news tends to be more graphic (Walma van der Molen, 2004), and younger children's thought processes have been described as being especially susceptible to salient visual and auditory features in a situation (see Bruner, 1966; Flavell, 1985). Therefore, exposure to the striking visual images of physical injury or death actually could produce more intense fear in younger children than in older children. In light of this concern, this study of fear reaction of children to television news focuses on children aged from 4- to 5-year-old. Thus it is helpful for us to examine some main development characteristics of children in this age group.

Development Characteristics of 4-5 Years Old Children

1. In this age group, children are unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality. So they generally report fright reactions from unrealistic or fantasy sources, such as monsters, witches, and dragons. And this inability leads to another confusion, which is that they tend to involve themselves in what they see in the fearful news story. It is plausible, then, to attribute younger children's frequent experience of fear when they watch a natural disaster in television news to their expectation that such a fearful event could happen to them also, regardless of the time and place such disaster occurred.

2. In this age group, children are limited in language skills so that it is difficult for them to comprehend news stories presented verbally. Studies show that younger children are less able than older children to draw inferences from verbally presented passages even when the information is age appropriate (Smith, and Wilson, 2002). Related to this, research on cognitive development has indicated that, in general, young children react to televised stimuli predominantly in terms of their perceptible characteristics, while older children tend to respond more to conceptual components of the televised stimulus, such as the perpetrator's motives or potential future threats (Bruner, 1966; Melkman, Tversky and Baratz, 1981). Hence younger children are more responsive to explicit visual depictions of a threat than older children (e.g. Cantor and Sparks, 1984). In fact, younger children are more likely than older children to attend to striking visual cues on television (Anderson & Lorch, 1983). In

addition, studies indicate that younger children are more emotionally responsive to visually depicted threats than non-visual ones in fictional programming (Cantor & Sparks, 1984; Sparks, 1986). So another reason for why natural disasters could engender the strongest fear in children in this age group is because they provide many explicit images of devastation.

3. In this age group, children are less able to think abstractly. So abstract threats, such as potential nuclear wars, may be less frightening to younger children because they are too difficult for them to comprehend.

The Goal of this Study

To sum up the above review, it seems important to investigate the fear reaction of younger child viewers to violent aspects of television news in greater detail. Unfortunately, the television news programs continue to be overlooked in research of harmful effects of media violence on children. Despite several decades of research and an extensive body of research findings on the impact of media violence on viewers, it is the case that nearly all such studies concentrated mostly on non-news programs and only provided support for an effect in adults (Romer, Jamieson, & Aday, 2003). Among the studies that did address children's media-induced fright reactions, most focused on fears induced by fictional television content (e.g., Cantor and Sparks, 1984; Spirek, 1993), rather than on fears induced by real-life violence depicted in television news (Molen, Valkenburg, & Peeters, 2002). In addition, the use of graphic visual images in news programs have been speculated as an important

determinant of children's affective responding, but there is very little research on the impact of graphic news images on children (Smith & Wilson, 2000). Indeed, Walma van der Molen (2004) achieved a complete and convincing research regarding this observation:

The large-scale content analyses of media violence that were specifically aimed at detecting harmful television content for children all exclude from their analyses broadcast news programs. Second, the legislative proposals that have been put forward to protect children from violent media content all disregard television news. Thus far, there has been no serious discussion about prohibiting television news during 'family viewing hours' or about providing a warning before news programs. In addition, the television parental guidelines (V-chip ratings), which were the result of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, are not applied to news and sports programs. In its publications, the American Academy of Pediatrics thus far also focused primarily on preventing the harmful effects of fictional violence. (p. 1771).

To make up the deficiency described above, there is a need for more efforts into the study of the effect of violence in television news on children. Such efforts could lead to two lines of research. One would focus on the level of the individual child, including exploring children's comprehension of and fear reactions to violence in television news. Another line of research would examine this phenomenon within an ecological framework.

As a developmental framework, ecological theory focuses on the effect of interactions between the developing individual and his or her environmental context broadly conceived. In other words, all individuals develop in contexts with

contextual characteristics that themselves influence and are influenced by the other contexts. One assumption of ecological theoretical perspectives is that there are several levels of environmental context. For example, Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) described micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystem contexts. These systems refer to, respectively, settings that contain and directly influence the individual (e.g, family and school), the relationship between settings that contain the individual (e.g., neighborhoods and child care), settings that do not contain the individual but have indirect influence (e.g., parental workplaces), and broader societal level values and ideologies that provide a total context for the other systems (e.g., levels of family violence in a society or societal messages about personal support for fellow citizens). Each of these system levels is presumed to affect the individual either directly or through other systems (Chibucos & Leite, 2005).

Regardless of level, these ecological contexts pose significant challenges to empirical measurement. Sociodemographic variables, such as educational attainment, gender, race, and household income, are often used as proxies for unmeasured structures and processes (such as discrimination, gendered socialization processes) that operate at a contextual level to influence individual growth and development. In this study, six sociodemographic variables are used consistently throughout the study to index ecological contexts, as will be suggested below.

From the perspective of ecological theory, family and social level variables are

influential on children's media consumption (Gertile & Walsh, 2002). For example, children in single parent homes watch more television each day than children in two-parent homes. Children in minority families watch more television. Children in low-income families watch more television than children in high-income families. Also children of parents with lower education levels display higher electronic media use. So it will be very interesting to see if the same patterns could be found in this study for the relationship between these sociodemographic variables and young children's exposure to television news and their fear reaction to such programs.

Also, parents' attitudes and parental behavior regarding family media viewing are an important part of ecologic processes that may be involved in children's exposure and reaction to television news. In fact, a growing body of literature on parental mediation of children's television viewing reveals that parents' or other adults' behaviors regarding television has a significant effect on children's reactions to television (Nathanson, 2001). So, for the purpose of this study, I will use six social demographic variables and parents' concern and behavior about the TVNV to index children's family context (gender of parent, number of parents living with the focus child, number of siblings living with the focus child, parents' concern and behavior) and his/her broader social ecology (race, household income, and parental education). Such study could provide the foundation and context for further studies. Contrarily, the lack of such knowledge will impede the study of effect of television news on child viewers.

Another benefit of this kind of research is that information obtained from parents' observations can make up the deficiency resulting from children's limited language skills to self report their media viewing patterns and reactions. The family setting provides an excellent context in which to examine the effects of violent television news on children. Parents are in a privileged position to notice whether their children are attracted by the television news, and whether their children experience fear due to specific aspects of the television news.

In sum, the goal of this study is to obtain a general picture, from the ecological point of view, of 4-5 years old children's exposure to television news and their fear reaction to such programs. To do so, I will examine how the rates of 4-5 years old children's exposure and fear reaction to television news relate to several social demographic variables. And since television news is a new field for study of fear reaction of the child viewers, it is worthy to do some comparison between television news and children's cartoon. As a result, three research questions were formulated.

Research Question 1: What are the rates of exposure to television news and fear reaction to such programs among children between the ages of 4 and 5 years, as reported by their parents? And what are parents' concerns about the TVNV and do they place any limitations on their children's exposure to television news?

The prevalence of exposure and fear reaction to television news relate to the necessity of adopting steps to eliminate such effect. To my knowledge, although evidence is accumulating that exposure and fear reaction of children to television

news are common; little is known about the exposure and fear reaction of children who are specifically aged from 4 to 5 years.

Research Question 2: What kinds of relationship do exist among the above variables and a series of demographic factors that index two levels of a child's ecological context?

Since parents' demographic factors could influence children's media consumption, it would be interesting to examine whether such pattern would also happen to television news. Parents' concern about the television news violence and their parental limitation on their children's exposure to television news should relate to each other strongly. And both of them may play an important role in how children watch television news program, and then affect to what extent their children feel fear when watching television news. So, I will examine how parents' levels of concern about news violence, parental attempts to place limitation on children's viewing patterns, children's exposure to television news violence, and children's fear reaction are distributed across sociodemographic categories. In addition, I will also examine how parents' levels of concern and restrictions or limitation on their child's viewing patterns are related to each other, and how both of them relate to their children's exposure to television news and their perceptions of their child's fear reaction.

Research Question 3: Focusing on television violence, are there differences in terms of parents' attitude about the relative seriousness of violence in television news versus children's cartoons and in parent perceptions of 4-5 years old children

fear reactions to each of these types of media?

Since children's cartoons are one of the most frequently researched topics when studying the effect of television violence on child viewers, it was designed as a reference to television news programs in the study. Moreover, the inclusion of questions about children's cartoons provides some external validity to this study of TVNV. Television cartoons may be a more commonly shared experience across parents and children in this country and thus could provide an anchor or reference for parents in responding to question about TVNV as an influence on their children.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Sample

The sample was drawn from four childcare centers located in different communities of Knoxville. The reason for choosing these childcare centers was not only for convenience, but also for including as many socioeconomic classes as possible. An application (see Appendix A) was filed with the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board and approval was obtained for the use of human subjects in research. In February 2005, teachers at these childcare centers distributed anonymous questionnaires (see Appendix B) to a total of 68 parents with 4-5 years old children enrolled in the centers, inviting them to participate. The parents were informed that if they would like to participate, they needed to fill out the questionnaires and return it to the teachers. Of the 68 questionnaires distributed to parents, 29 completed questionnaires were returned after one week, for an overall response rate of 43%. Two of these 29 questionnaires were excluded because the age of focus children were not 4-5 years old, thus rendering a final sample of 27 subjects.

Measurement of Variables

A questionnaire was developed for the study and used for data collection. This questionnaire consisted of 27 self-rating questions with an attempt to gather data in three parts. The first part is about parents' variables. Questions 1 – 9 assessed parents' attitudes and concerns about the violence in television news. Responses to

question 2 were used as data for one variable, the levels of parents' concern about television news violence. Also, the mean scores of respondents to the nine questions (question 1, four items in question 4 including sports violence, crime violence, bad language, suffering of others, question 5, 7, 8, 9) were used to construct a parental concern scale to reflect combined concern and attitudes about appropriate actions to address concerns. Statistical tests supported that the scale is a viable scale (Cronbach's alpha = .903; and exploratory factor analysis suggests two factors, the first factor accounts for 57.7% of variance, and all items load on first factor at between .667 and .913). Questions 11 – 12 measured parents' limitation on young children's exposure to television news and children's cartoons. Responses to question 11 were used as data for another variable, the extent of parents' limitation on their children's exposure to television news.

The second part is about parental observation of their children. Questions 13-16 investigated some aspects of 4-5 year old children's exposure to television news, such as frequency, time of day, and the presence of others while the child is viewing the news. Responses to question 13 were used as data for one variable, the rate of 4-5 years old children's exposure to television news. Questions 17 – 19 examined parents' observations of specific fear reactions to violent television news among children between the ages of 4 and 5 years. Responses to question 17 were used as data for one variable, the overall rate of fear reaction of 4-5 years old children.

The third part, which is questions 20 –27, included a series of personal

questions to obtain demographic information. Subjects were requested to provide the following descriptive information: sex, age, race, educational level, household incomes, and the number of parents and siblings living with the focus child. This demographic information was used to index the child's family context and his or her broader social ecology, as indicated in Chapter Two above.

Pretest of the Questionnaire

Three parents were recruited to pretest the questionnaire to insure that wording and phrasing in the questionnaire were not misleading and that the length of the questionnaire would not make participants impatient.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire data were entered into an electronic database for analysis. Frequency distribution was the basic data analysis tool. In addition, to explore the relationship between predictor variables and main outcome variables, bivariate analyses, including controlled cross-tabulations, phi or Cramer's V test, and one-tail Pearson Correlations were conducted. The SPSS analytic software package was utilized for data management and analysis.

Reclassification of Variables

Partly due to the low response rate, the obtained sample size was small. Full results of major variables are shown in Chapter IV. However, in order to analyze the data in a meaningful way, several variables were reclassified. As a result:

- Household income was reclassified as three categories instead of nine

in the questionnaire: families with household income under \$29,999 were labeled as low income, families with household income from \$30,000 to \$59,999 were labeled as middle income, families with household income \$60,000 or over were labeled as high income;

— Parents' educational levels were reclassified as two categories instead of eight in the questionnaire: those parents who held bachelor's degree or above were labeled as high education, the rest were labeled as low education;

— Parental limitation on their children's exposure to television news was reclassified as two categories instead of five in the questionnaire: those parents who made limitation on their child's viewing of television news very often were labeled as high parental limitation, and the rest were labeled as low parental limitation;

— The degree of parents' concern of the television news violence was reclassified as three categories instead of five because no parents reported themselves as "never thought" about it or "not at all" concerned. The remaining categories include "not very concerned" or parents with low concern; "concerned" or parents with moderate concern; and "very concerned" or parents with high degree of concern;

— Four to five years old children's exposure to television news was reclassified as three categories instead of five in the questionnaire: low exposure (children who were "not at all" exposed to television news), middle exposure (children who were exposed to television news "only once or twice" or "average once

per week”), and high exposure (children who were exposed to television “average twice” to “four times per week” or “almost every day”);

— Fear reaction of 4-5 years old children was reclassified as two categories instead of five in the questionnaire: no fear (children who had “never” been frightened), and any fear (the rest children).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter findings from this study of parental perceptions of the effect of televised news violence on their children are presented. After discussion of sample characteristics, results for each of the research questions is presented. As indicated in earlier chapters, the analysis of data was generally structured so that patterns of association between sociodemographic variables and parental attitudes and behaviors could be examined.

Sample

A sociodemographic picture of respondents is summarized in Table 1. Respondents' "age" has not been included within the summary, due to misunderstanding among some respondents (seven respondents provided their child's age instead of their own age). In general, however, the age of respondents ranged from 25 to 45.

In this sample, almost three-fourths of the participants were women, and white participants accounted for almost half of the sample. The family structure in this sample tended to be two-parent and one-child household. High-educated parents (who held bachelor's degrees or above) accounted for the bulk of this sample. With regard to income, parents from middle-class families (with household income from \$30,000 to \$59,999) accounted only a small part of the sample, with the remainder of parents roughly divided between lower income (<\$29000) and higher income

Table 1. Demographic information

Variables	N	Percent (%)
Sex		
Female	20	74.1
Male	7	25.9
Race:		
White	13	48.1
Black, African American, or Negro	3	11.1
Asian	6	22.2
Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	1	3.7
Others	4	14.8
Number of parents living with the focus child		
Both-parent household	19	70.4
Single-parent household	7	25.9
Others	1	3.7
Number of siblings living with the focus child		
None	13	48.1
One	10	37.0
Two	4	14.8
Degree of Education:		
Some high school	3	11.1
High school diploma or the equivalent	4	14.8
Associate degree	1	3.7
Bachelor's degree	8	29.6
Master's degree	7	25.9
Doctorate degree (Ph. D. or Ed. D.)	3	11.1
Professional degree (MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD, DD)	1	3.7
Household Income:		
\$10,000 - \$ 14,999	1	3.7
\$15,000 - \$19,999	5	18.5
\$20,000 - \$ 29,999	4	14.8
\$30,000 - \$ 39,999	1	3.7
\$40,000 - \$49,999	3	11.1
\$50,000 - \$59,999	1	3.7
\$60,000 - \$79,999	4	14.8
\$80,000 - \$99,999	4	14.8
\$100,000 and over	3	11.1

(\$60,000+) households.

Results for Research Question 1

The first research question asks about the degree of parental concern about TVNV, whether parents monitor or limit their child's exposure to TVNV, and their perception of their child's reactions to TVNV. These results are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Information about the degree of parents' concern about TVNV and the extent of parental limitation on their children's exposure to television news is summarized in Table 2. The distribution of the parents' concern about TVNV is skewed toward the higher end of the concern continuum. No parents reported that they never thought about such an issue, or they were not at all concerned about it. Parents who were not very concerned about TVNV, who were concerned, and who were very concerned accounted for three-tenths, four-tenths, and three-tenths respectively. In terms of parental behavior, four-tenths of parents limited their children's exposure to television news very often. A small number of parents indicated never limited or no attempt to restrict their child's exposure to TVNV.

How frequently 4-5 years old children were exposed to television news programs and experienced fear reactions to such programs is summarized in Table 3. As may be seen in the first panel, almost three-tenths of parents reported that their child had not been exposed to television news at all, and only one-tenth of parents reported that their children were exposed to television news almost every day.

Table 2. The degree of parents' concern about television news violence and the extent of parental limitation on their children's exposure to television news

Variables	N	Percent (%)
The degree of parents' concern about television news violence		
Never thought	0	0.0
Not all	0	0.0
Not very concerned	8	29.6
Concerned	11	40.7
Very concerned	8	29.6
The extent of parental limitation on their children's exposure to television news		
Never	3	11.1
Once in a while	3	11.1
A few times	6	22.2
Often	4	14.8
Very often	11	40.7

Table 3. Percentage of 4-5 years old children's exposure to television news and their fear reaction reported by their parents

Variables	N	Percent (%)
Exposure to television news of 4-5 years old children reported by their parents		
Not at all	8	29.6
Only once or twice	6	22.2
Average once per week	4	14.8
Average twice per week	3	11.1
Average three to four times per week	3	11.1
Almost every day	3	11.1
Fear reaction of 4-5 years old children reported by their parents		
Never	12	44.4
Once in a while	8	29.6
A few times	4	14.8
Often	1	3.7
Very often	1	3.7

We could also see from Table 3 that, the parents felt that a fear reaction of their 4-5 years old child to television news seldom occurred. Compared with parents who said their children never experienced fear and children who experienced fear only once in a while, very few parents said their children experienced fear often or very often.

In addition to the above rates, the results contained some other information about children's exposure to television news, including the length, the time and the reasons of watching television news. Among the children who did watch television news, very few watched "half part" or "most part" of television news (6.6% and 13.3% respectively). Actually most children (80.0%) watched only a small part of television news.

The reasons for children's exposure to television news were listed as the following: parents or other adults were watching television news when the children were with them (68.7%), the television was always on (25%), and the television news attracted their children (12.5%) (due to the participants' ability to make multiple choices, the total percentage adds to more than 100%). As mentioned above, it is interesting to notice that one possible reason listed in the questionnaire, siblings were watching television news when the children were with them, did not appear in the respondents' answers at all.

As for the television news programs to which the children were exposed most often, the result showed that the sequence was evening news programs (63.1%),

morning news programs (26.3%), weekend news programs (15.8%), and others (5.2%) (due to the participants' ability to make multiple choices, the total percentage adds to more than 100%).

Results for Research Question 2

The second main question addressed in this research pertains to the linkage or connection among the sociodemographic variables, the degree of parents' concern, the level of parental limitation, the amount of children's exposure to television news, and the presence or absence of children's fear reaction. This information is shown in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4 indicates that parents' demographic variables may be associated with degree of parents' concern about television news violence, level of parental limitation on their children's exposure to television news, children's exposure to television news, and children's fear reaction to such programs.

In terms of parents' concerns about television news violence, female parents tended to be more concerned than male parents. More White parents expressed the highest level of concern than did other parents. Although more than half of Black parents described themselves as "concerned," none of them were "very concerned," which was unlike white and Asian parents. It is interesting to notice that Asian parents had the largest percentage of parents who were not very concerned. The differences in degrees of parents' concern either between parents in two-parent families and parents in one-parent families, or between parents with only one child

Table 4: Degrees of parents' concern about television news violence, levels of parental limitation on their children's exposure to television news, children's exposure to television news, and percent with any fear of children by demographic variables

	Degrees of parental concern about television news violence			Parental limitation		Children's exposure to television news			Any fear
	NVC*	C*	VC*	Low	High	Low	Middle	High	
Total (N)	8	11	8	16	11	8	10	9	14
(%)	29.3	40.7	29.3	59.3	40.7	29.6	38.0	33.3	53.8
Gender									
Female	25.0	40.0	35.0	50.0	50.0	35.0	40.0	25.0	57.9
Male	42.9	42.9	14.3	85.7	14.3	14.3	28.6	57.1	42.9
Race									
White	15.4	38.5	46.2	30.8	69.2	46.2	30.8	23.1	41.7
Black	33.3	66.7	0	100.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	66.7	33.3
Asian	50.0	16.7	33.3	83.3	16.7	0.0	50.0	50.0	83.3
Others	40.0	60.0	0.0	80.0	20.0	20.0	60.0	20.0	60.0
				Cramer's V=.57, p=.033					
Number of parents living with the focus child									
Two-parent	26.3	42.1	31.6	63.2	36.8	21.1	52.6	26.3	68.4
One-parent	42.9	42.9	14.3	57.1	42.9	57.1	0.0	42.9	16.7
									Phi=.49 p=.047
Number of siblings living with the focus child									
None	23.1	46.2	30.8	38.5	61.5	46.2	23.1	30.8	41.7
One or above	35.7	35.7	28.6	78.6	21.4	14.3	50.0	35.7	64.3
				Phi=-.41, p=.034					
Parents' education									
Low	50.0	37.5	12.5	75.0	25.0	25.0	12.5	62.5	37.5
High	21.1	42.1	36.8	52.6	47.4	31.6	47.4	21.1	61.1
Household income									
Low	50.0	40.0	10.0	70.0	30.0	30.0	20.0	50.0	40.0
Middle	20.0	20.0	60.0	40.0	60.0	40.0	20.0	40.0	80.0
High	18.2	45.5	36.4	54.5	45.5	18.2	63.6	18.2	60.0

* NVC = not very concerned, C = concerned, VC = very concerned

Table 5. Parents’ attitude by parents’ gender, race, family composition, education levels, household income, and parents’ concern about television news violence (%).

Parents’ attitude towards television news violence	Total sample	Gender		Race				Parents		Siblings	
		Female	Male	White	Black	Asian	Others	Two	One	None	Others
N	27	20	7	13	3	6	5	19	7	13	14
1. Agree with that the television news are violent	66.6	75.0	42.9	84.7	33.3	50.0	60.0	68.4	57.2	77.0	57.2
2. Concern about young children’s exposure to sports violence in television news	51.8	50.0	57.2	53.9	66.7	50.0	40.0	57.9	28.6	53.9	50.0
3. Concern about young children’s exposure to crime violence in television news	77.7	85.0	57.2	92.3	66.6	66.7	60.0	84.2	57.2	92.3	64.3
4. Concern about young children’s exposure to bad language in television news	77.7	90.0	42.9	84.6	66.6	83.3	60.0	79.0	71.5	84.6	71.5
5. Concern about young children’s exposure to suffering of others	77.7	85.0	57.2	92.3	66.7	66.7	60.0	79.0	71.5	84.6	71.5
6. Agree with that parents should monitor young children’s television news viewing	77.8	85.0	57.2	92.3	66.7	83.3	40.0	89.4	42.9	92.3	64.3
7. Agree with that there should be a rating system on television news like other media	62.9	65.0	57.2	61.6	66.7	83.3	40.0	68.4	42.9	61.6	64.2
8. Agree with that there should be children’s television news programs	59.2	60.0	57.2	53.9	66.6	83.4	40.0	68.5	28.6	61.6	57.1
9. Agree with that television news may make young children fearful	74.0	80.0	57.2	77.0	66.7	83.3	60.0	78.9	57.2	77.0	71.4
10. Parental concern scale (mean score)	3.87	3.97	3.59	4.13	3.52	3.84	3.47	3.97	3.41	4.04	3.71

Table 5. Continued

Parents' attitude towards television news violence	Educational levels		Household income			Parental concern about television news violence		
	Low	High	Low	Middle	High	NVC*	C*	VC*
N	8	19	10	5	11	8	11	8
1. Agree with that the television news are violent	50.0	73.6	50.0	80.0	81.9	0.0	90.9	100.0
2. Concern about young children's exposure to sports violence in television news	37.5	57.9	40.0	40.0	63.6	12.5	63.6	75.0
3. Concern about young children's exposure to crime violence in television news	50.0	89.5	50.0	100.0	90.9	25.0	100.0	100.0
4. Concern about young children's exposure to bad language in television news	62.5	84.2	60.0	100.0	81.9	50.0	90.9	87.5
5. Concern about young children's exposure to suffering of others	62.5	84.2	60.0	80.0	90.9	37.5	90.9	100.0
6. Agree with that parents should monitor young children's television news viewing	37.5	94.8	40.0	100.0	100.0	37.5	72.7	75.0
7. Agree with that there should be a rating system on television news like other media	50.0	68.5	50.0	80.0	63.7	37.5	90.9	100.0
8. Agree with that there should be children's television news programs	37.5	68.5	40.0	80.0	63.7	25.0	81.8	62.5
9. Agree with that television news may make young children fearful	50.0	84.2	50.0	100.0	81.8	25.0	90.9	100.0
10. Parental concern scale (mean score)	3.43	4.06	3.44	4.27	4.06	2.94	4.09	4.50

* NVC = not very concerned, C = Concerned, VC = very concerned

or parents with more than one child, are not very noticeable. Parents in two-parent families or parents with only one child were a little more concerned in general than parents in one-parent families or parents with more than one child. Parents with more education or more income tended to be more concerned, although such a tendency was not very clear between middle-income parents and high-income parents. As a whole, the differences between “not very concerned” and “concerned” were much bigger than that between “concerned” and “very concerned”.

In terms of levels of parental limitation on their children’s exposure to television news, more female parents indicated “high” limitation than male parents. Compared to other races, only among white parents did more parents indicate “high” limitation; and no Black parents ever indicated “high” limitation. The difference of parental limitation levels between parents in two-parent and one-parent families was not very noticeable. More parents with only one child indicated “high” limitation than parents with more than one child. Parents with more education and income indicated “high” limitation more often than parents with less education and income.

In terms of children’s exposure to television news, one-third of sample respondents indicated a high level of exposure. More male parents than female parents reported high exposure of their children to television news. Black and Asian parents reported high exposure most frequently, as did single parents and parents with two or more children. Parents with the lowest education and income indicated high exposure more often than parents with more education and income.

In terms of children's fear reactions to television news, female parents reported more children's fear reactions than male parents. Children of Asian parents were reported to be those who had the most fear reactions, while children of Black parents were reported to be those who had the least fear reactions. Parents in two-parent families or with more than one child reported more children's fear reactions than parents in one-parent families or with only one child. Parents with more education or middle and high income reported children's fear reaction more often than did parents with less education or income.

In Table 4, phi or Cramer's V tests revealed that there are three statistically significant relationships, including the relationship between parents' race and parental limitation levels, between the number of siblings living with the focus child and parental limitation levels, and between the number of parents living with the focus child and children's fear reactions.

How are parents' attitude toward TVNV associated with parents' demographic variables and parents' concern? These connections are shown in detail in Table 5. In addition to their overall concern about level of TVNV described above, the parents were also asked some detailed questions on their attitudes toward TVNV. Since the detailed feedback of these questions was of a large quantity, percentages are presented in truncated form. That is, only a portion of a frequency distribution is presented in the table. The omitted categories would bring the total to 100% if they were included in the table. In Table 5, the datum in each cell is the combined percentage of parents who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statements, or who are "concerned" or "very concerned" about the statements. Finally, Table 5 also shows the mean score on the overall scale of parental concern for each category of the sociodemographic variables.

The first column in Table 5 presents the overall frequencies for the sample as whole on parents' attitudes toward TVNV. The majority of parents agreed that television news was violent in general (66.6%) or in some specific areas (51.8-77.7%), and might make young children fearful (74.0%). Most parents believed it necessary to monitor young children's television news viewing (77.7%), and to make some help available for such monitoring, such as a rating system on television news as is available for other media (62.9%) or television news programs tailored for children (59.2%).

Table 5 also presents the breakdowns of parents' attitudes toward TVNV by parents' demographic variables and parents' concern about TVNV. By and large, the information in this table reveals differences among categories within each sociodemographic variable and among levels of parental concern. More female parents than male parents agreed with or were concerned about the questionnaire statements about TVNV (concern about children's exposure to sports violence in television news was the sole exception). More White parents agreed that television news are violent and were concerned about specific aspects of TVNV than other parents. Although more White parents believed that parents should monitor children's television news viewing than did other parents, more Asian parents expressed their agreement on actions to address concerns than did other parents. More parents in two-parent households agreed with or were concerned about these statements about TVNV than parents in one-parent households. More parents with only one child agreed with or were concerned about these statements about TVNV than parents with two or more children, but the difference is not so big as differences described above. Also, the information in Table 5 indicated that more parents with high education,

income or more concern about TVNV tend to agree with or be more concerned about the statements.

There is one point that deserves to be noticed; that is, the differences either between “middle” and “high” income or between “concerned” and “very concerned” are both arbitrary. This point can be examined by the frequencies across levels of each predictor variable for “concern about young children’s exposure to suffering of others”. As parents’ education levels moved from low to high, percentages went from 62.5% to 84.2%. Across three increasing levels of household income, percentages rose from 60.0% in low-income family to 80.0% in middle-income family, to 90.0% in high-income household. With regard to parental concern about television news violence, percentage went from 37.5% in low parental concern to 100.0% in both middle and high parental concern. A different “cut-point” for distinguishing among middle and high income or “concerned” and “very concerned” might have yielded different results.

Table 5 also contains the information of the parental concern scale to examine how “ecological predictors” related to parental concern scale. The result reflects the single item analyses in Table 5. The small sample size means that few of the differences across categories of predictors are statistically significant, but notable are significant differences by education ($p = .09$) and single-item indicator of degree of parental concern ($p = .000$).

How is parental limitation on their children’s exposure to television news associated with parents’ concern or parents’ attitude toward TVNV? These connections are shown in detail in Table 6. Table 6 indicates very clearly that, compared with other parents, parents who limited their children’s exposure to television news very often were more often concerned about TVNV in terms of

Table 6. Parents’ attitude about television news violence by parental limitation on their children’s exposure to television news.

Parents’ concern and attitude about television news violence	Parents who limited their children’s exposure to television news “very often” (N=11)	Other parents (N = 16)
1. Very concern about television news violence	54.5%	50.0%
2. Agree or strongly agree with that the television news are violent	90.9%	50.0%
3. Concerned or very concerned about young children’s exposure to sports violence in television news	63.7%	43.8%
4. Concerned or very concerned about young children’s exposure to crime violence in television news	90.9%	75.0%
5. Concerned or very concerned about young children’s exposure to bad language in television news	100.0%	62.5%
6. Concerned or very concerned about young children’s exposure to suffering of others	90.9%	68.8%
7. Agree or strongly agree with that parents should monitor young children’s television news viewing	90.9%	68.8%
8. Agree or strongly agree with that there should be a rating system on television news like other media	63.6%	62.5%
9. Agree or strongly agree with that there should be children’s television news programs	63.6%	56.3%
10. Agree or strongly agree with that television news may make young children fearful	81.8%	68.8%
11. Parental concern scale (mean score)	4.30	3.57

general or specific kinds of violence (except the sports violence in television news); more of them agreed or strongly agreed that television news was violent and might make children fearful, and that children's exposure to television news should be monitored. Especially notable, statistically significant relationships were found between parents' concerns about TVNV and parents' high limitation on their children's to television news ($\Phi = .495, p = .037$), between parents' agreement on monitoring children's television news viewing and parents' high limitation on their children's exposure to television news ($\Phi = .659, p = .003$), between parents' agreement that there should be some rating system on television news like other media and parents' high limitation on their children's exposure to television news ($\Phi = .638, p = .027$), and between parents' agreement that television news may make children fearful and parents' high limitation on their children's exposure to television news ($\Phi = .495, p = .030$).

How is children's exposure to television news associated with parents' demographic information, parents' concerns, and parental limitation? These connections are shown in detail in Table 7. Table 7 indicates that more male parents tended to report high children's exposure to television news than female parents. Compared to other parents, more Black parents reported high children's exposure to television news, as did single parents and parents with two or more children. More parents with less education or income reported high children's exposure to television news than parents with more education or income. Parents who were not very concerned or who indicated low parental limitation reported high children's exposure to television news more often than did other parents.

How are children's fear reactions associated with parents' demographic variables, parents' concerns, parental limitation, and children's exposure to television

Table 7. Children’s exposure to television news by parents’ gender, race, family composition, parents’ education levels, household income, parents’ concern about television news, and parental limitation on their children’s exposure to television news

Children’s exposure to television news	Total sample	Gender		Race				Number of parents living with the focus child		Number of siblings living with the focus child	
		Female	Male	White	Black	Asian	Other	Two	One	None	One or above
N	27	20	7	13	3	6	5	19	7	13	14
Low	29.6	35.0	14.3	46.2	33.3	0.0	20.0	21.1	57.1	46.2	14.3
Middle	37.0	40.0	28.6	30.8	0.0	50.0	60.0	52.6	0.0	23.1	50.0
High	33.3	25.0	57.1	23.1	66.7	50.0	20.0	26.3	42.9	30.8	35.7

Children’s exposure to television news	Parents’ education levels		Household income			Levels of parents’ concern			Parental limitation	
	Low	High	Low	Middle	High	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned	Low	High
N	8	19	10	5	11	8	11	8	16	11
Low	25.0	31.6	30.0	40.0	18.2	12.5	36.4	37.5	18.8	45.5
Middle	12.5	47.4	20.0	20.0	63.6	37.5	36.4	37.5	37.5	36.4
High	62.5	21.1	50.0	40.0	18.2	50.0	27.3	25.0	43.8	18.2

news? These connections are shown in detail in Table 8. In addition to the general fear reaction of children, the parents were also asked to report children's specific fear reactions. Similar to parents' feedback on their detailed attitudes to television news violence, the parents' feedback about children's specific fear reactions was of a large quantity. Therefore, percentages are presented in truncated form to summarize such information. In Table 8, the datum in each cell is the percentage of children who had ever had any fear reaction to television news.

Table 8 provides the overall frequencies for the sample as a whole on children's general and specific fear reaction to television news reported by their parents. Except for asking questions, being upset or fearful, most other specific fear reactions occurred very seldom. The most noticeable fear reaction was asking questions. Almost eight children out of ten had asked questions after viewing television news. Table 8 also gives the breakdowns of children's general and specific fear reaction to television news by parents' gender, race, number of parents and siblings who live with the focus child, parents' concern, parental limitation, and children's exposure to television news. In terms of children's overall fear reactions, inspection of this table revealed a few systematic patterns across categories of these variables. That is, female parents, Asian parents, parents in two-parent households, parents of more than one child, and parents with more education and income were more likely to indicate having observed any fear reaction to TVNV on the part of their child. Moreover, parents with higher degrees of concern, parents who limited their child's exposure to TV news, and parents whose children had less exposure to TV news were also more likely to have observed any fear reaction to TVNV on the part of their child. However, when specific fear reactions were examined, it was more

Table 8. Children’s general and specific fear reaction to television news by parents’ gender, race, family composition, educational levels, household income, parents’ concern of television news violence, and parental monitoring on their children’s exposure to television news (%)

	Total sample	Gender		Race				Number of parents		Number of siblings		Parents’ education levels	
		F	M	White	Black	Asian	Other	Two	One	None	One or above	Low	High
N	27	20	7	13	3	6	5	19	7	13	14	8	19
Any fear	53.9	55.0	42.9	38.5	33.3	83.3	60.0	68.4	0.0	38.5	64.3	37.5	63.2
Children’s specific fear reaction to television news													
Crying	22.2	10.0	28.6	0.0	33.3	0.0	60.0	15.9	4.3	7.7	21.4	37.5	15.8
Scream	29.6	20.0	28.6	15.4	33.3	0.0	60.0	21.1	28.3	23.1	21.4	50.0	21.1
Upset	51.9	50.0	28.6	38.5	33.3	33.3	80.0	57.9	14.3	38.5	50.0	37.5	57.9
Fearful	55.6	50.0	42.8	46.1	33.4	33.3	80.0	57.9	28.6	46.1	50.0	50.0	57.9
Nightmare	25.9	10.0	42.8	7.7	66.7	0.0	40.0	15.8	28.6	0.0	35.7	50.0	15.8
Asking questions	81.5	80.0	57.1	76.9	33.4	83.3	80.0	89.4	28.6	76.9	71.5	62.5	89.5
Thumb-sucking	14.8	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	5.3	0.0	7.7	0.0	12.5	15.8

Table 8. Continued

	Household income			Levels of parents' concern			Parental limitation		Children's exposure to television news		
	Low	Middle	High	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned	Low	High	Low	Middle	High
N	10	5	11	8	11	8	16	11	8	10	9
Any fear	40.0	80.0	54.5	37.5	54.5	62.5	50.0	54.5	37.5	60.0	55.6
Children's specific fear reaction to television news											
Crying	30.0	0.0	9.1	12.5	27.3	0.0	18.8	9.1	12.5	20.0	11.9
Scream	50.0	0.0	9.1	12.5	45.5	0.0	25.0	18.2	25.0	20.0	22.2
Upset	40.0	60.0	45.5	37.5	64.5	37.5	43.8	45.4	37.5	70.0	22.2
Fearful	50.0	60.0	45.4	25	81.8	50.0	43.7	54.5	37.5	50.0	55.6
Nightmare	40.0	0.0	9.1	25	18.2	12.5	25.0	9.1	12.5	20.0	22.2
Asking questions	60.0	80.0	90.9	50.0	81.8	87.5	74.9	72.7	50.0	90.0	77.8
Thumb-sucking	10.0	20.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	63.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1

difficult to find and identify systematic patterns in the results.

In addition to cross-tabulation analyses, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among these variables. The result indicated that several relationships were statistical significant (one-tail tests).

— The first one is between the number of parents living with the focus child and children's fear reactions ($r = -.474$, $p = .007$). That is, children of two-parent families are perceived as more fearful of television news. (The numbers of parents living with the focus child were coded as: "1" = two-parent family, "2" = single-parent family.)

— The second one is between the number of siblings living with the focus child and parental limitation on children's exposure to television news ($r = -.408$, $p = .017$). That is, parents of only children are more likely to limit their children's exposure to television news. (The numbers of siblings living with the focus child were coded as: "1" = no sibling, "2" = one or more siblings.)

— The third one is between parents' concern about television news and parental limitation on children's exposure to television news ($r = .490$, $p = .005$). That is, the more concerned parents are about television news, the more often they limit their children's exposure to television news.

— The fourth one is between parental limitation on children's exposure to television news and children's exposure to television news ($r = -.324$, $p = .005$). That is, the more often parents limit their children's exposure to television news, the less their children would be exposed to television news.

It is noticeable that neither parents' education nor household income was found to relate significantly or systematically to children's exposure to television

news or to parent perceptions of their child's fear reactions to such programs. It is inconsistent with previous research regarding television violence. Since television news is one kind of television program, more research is needed to examine such inconsistencies.

Results for Research Question 3

The third main question addressed in this research pertains to the comparison between television news and children's cartoons in term of media violence. A series of questions asked parents to compare cartoons and television news reports in several ways.

Early in the questionnaire parents were asked to compare the degree of violence in children's cartoons to television news. They were given the following response choices: that TV news is more violent than children's cartoons, as violent as children's cartoons, less violent than children's cartoons, or they could respond that they didn't know. Results indicated that slight majority of parents (55.6%) believed that television news was more violent than children's cartoons. Only a few parents believed that television news was as violent as children's cartoon or less violent than children's cartoon (11.1% and 14.8% respectively). The other 18.5% parents reported that they did not know which program was more violent.

Parents were also asked their views about restricting their child's viewing of cartoons and TV news. The percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed to limit children's television news viewing was the same as that of parents who agreed or strongly agreed to limit children's cartoon viewing (25.9% and 51.9% respectively). However, although no parent felt that parents ought not to limit children's television news viewing, there were three parents (11.1%) who disagreed that parents should limit children's cartoon viewing (see Table 9).

Table 9. Comparison between television news and children's cartoons (1)

	N	Disagree (%)	No opinion (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
To what extent do you agree that parents should monitor their young children's television news viewing?	27	0	22.2	25.9	51.9
To what extent do you agree that parents should monitor their young children's cartoon viewing?	27	11.1	11.1	25.9	51.9

The frequency of parents' limitation of their young children's television news viewing was almost the same as that of children's cartoon viewing (see Table 10). More than half the parents reported that they "often" or "very often" limited their young children's viewing of either television news (55.5%) or children's cartoons (62.9%).

The number of the parents who believed that television news might make young children fearful was larger than that of the parents who believed the children's cartoons would do the same (74% vs. 55.5%). The number of the parents who disagreed that television news might make young children fearful (18%) was only half of that of the parents who disagreed that children's cartoons might make young children fearful (37%) (see Table 11).

There are small differences in the percentages of parents who reported a fear reaction of their child to television news versus cartoons (54% vs. 67%). However, only a very small (3.7%) portion of parents reported very frequent fear reaction to either medium, children's cartoons or television news (see Table 12).

The comparisons above suggest linkages between the ways in which parents treat television news and children's cartoons. Actually, a correlation indicated that the relationship between parents' agreement on monitoring children's television news viewing and parents' agreement on monitoring children's cartoons viewing, and the relationship between parents' limitation of children's television news viewing and parents' limitation of children's cartoons viewing are both statistical significant ($r = .653$, $p = .000$; and $r = .807$, $p = .000$). Such significant relationships are revealed in further detail in Table 13. In Table 13, two-third (18 of 27) cases fall on the diagonal; this suggests symmetry in parents' restriction on children's television news and cartoons viewing. Parents who place restrictions on one type of television viewing

Table 10. Comparison between television news and children's cartoons (2)

	N	Never (%)	Once in a while (%)	A Few times (%)	Often (%)	Very often (%)
Do you limit your young child's viewing of television news	27	11.1	11.1	22.2	14.8	40.7
Do you limit your young child's viewing of children's cartoons	22	14.8	7.4	14.8	33.3	29.6

Table 11. Comparison between television news and children's cartoons (3)

	N	Disagree (%)	No opinion (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
To what extent do you agree that television news may make young children fearful?	27	18.5	7.4	48.1	25.9
To what extent do you agree that children's cartoons may make young children fearful?	27	37.0	7.4	44.4	11.1

Table 12. Comparison between television news and children's cartoons (4)

	N	Never (%)	Once in a while (%)	A Few times (%)	Often (%)	Very often (%)
How frequently has your young child been frightened or upset after watching television news	27	46.1	30.7	15.4	3.8	3.8
How frequently has your young child been frightened or upset after watching children's cartoons	26	33.3	37	22.2	3.7	3.7

Table 13. Comparison between television news and children's cartoon (5)

		Do you limit your young child's viewing of television news				
		Never	Once in a while	A Few times	Often	Very often
Do you limit your young child's viewing of children's cartoons	Never	3	0	1	0	0
	Once in a while	0	1	1	0	0
	A few times	0	1	3	0	0
	Often	0	0	1	4	4
	Very often	0	1	0	0	7

also are likely to restrict the other type of television viewing.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The overarching goal of this study is to draw more attention to the effect of television news violence, or TVNV, on young children. Since it is noticed that TVNV has become a social phenomenon with some potential effects on its viewers, it is necessary to examine the effect seriously in order to prevent its negative influence on viewers, especially on child viewers. By examining the fear reaction of 4-5 year old children to TVNV, this study brings us one step closer to achieving this goal.

It seems that television news violence has already become an issue about which parents express general concern. In this study, all of the parents expressed concerns about this issue to some extent. All of the parents agreed that the television news is fearful for young children. Not only are parents concerned about the effect of television news violence on young children, they also limit their young children's exposure to television news. Nine out of ten parents indicated limitation, and four of them indicated a very often limitation.

It is very interesting to find out that the rates of 4-5 year old children's exposure to television news and their fear reactions are actually not high. It seems that children in this age group do not watch television news very often. Only one-tenth of the children watch television news almost every day; on the other hand, three-tenths children did not watch television news at all. This finding is consistent with previous research. For example, Smith and Wilson (2002) found out older children watched significantly more television news than younger children. In addition, even for children who did have exposure to television news, their exposure to television news could be passive, that is, they were sometimes "forced" to be exposed to television

news as the televisions were on when they were present, either because others were watching television news or because the televisions were always on. Young children's passive exposure to television news can be indicated further by the finding that the television news to which young children are exposed most often is evening program. When children were exposed to television news, most of them were not "good" viewers, because only a very small part of them watched more than half of a given television news program.

Not only is the rate of 4-5 years old children's exposure to television news low, but also the rate of their fear reactions to television news. Obviously a low rate of exposure could result in a low rate of fear reactions. However, an alternative explanation may be that the developmental level of children in this age group limits their understanding of the news broadcasted on television, and thus leads to less fear reaction.

One possible explanation for the inconsistency between parents' high concern about the fearfulness of TVNV to their children and their perception of their children's low fear reaction could be that parents have underestimated their children's fear reactions to the mass media (Cantor, and Reilly, 1982). For example, it was found in this study that the number of parents living with the focus child relates to children's fear reactions. Parents from two-parent families reported more fear reactions than parents from one-parent families. How could this happen? It is reasonable to expect that the parents from two-parent families have more time to observe their children than those from one-parent family, so maybe it is not because children from one-parent families are more resilient, but because some of their fear has not been observed by their parents. Studies are needed to interview children themselves in order to validate the result of this study.

One goal of this research is to examine whether ecological environment is influential on both young children's television news consumption and their fear reactions. In this study, ecological environment is indexed by two levels of variables. One level is family context, including parents' gender, the number of parents and siblings living with the focus child, and parents' concern and behavior about TVNV; another level is broader social context, as indexed by parents' race, education level, and household income. The results reveal that all these socio-demographic variables are associated with young children's exposure to television news and/or their fear reaction. It is consistent with the findings of previous research on other media violence (Gertile & Walsh, 2002). Although not all the relationships are statistically significant in this study, in general there were systematic differences.

Among the three sociodemographic variables that indexed the children's broader social context, that is, parents' race, education level, and household income, parents' education level related to children's exposure to television news and fear reaction strongest and most consistently. For example, parents with the highest levels of educational attainment were most likely to be concerned about TVNV and to limit their child's exposure to television. This suggests that to the extent that TVNV is harmful, then children of parents with less education will be most vulnerable to those effects of TVNV. This finding gives us a reminder that when we examine the effect of television news on young children, we should consider the effect of family and broader society contexts on these children.

Another way to look at the variables in this study is to divide the variables into three parts, that is, parents' socio-demographic variables, parents' concern and behavior about TVNV. It is the case that variables in each part relate to those in other two parts; that is, the sociodemographic variables were associated with parental

concern and with parental behavior; and parental concern and parental behavior were also consistently related to each other.

Another interesting finding from this study is the comparison between television news and children's cartoons in term of media violence. On the one hand, parents seemed to believe that television news is more violent and could be a more fearful viewing experience for young children than children's cartoons are, and they were more likely to agree to limit children's exposure to television news than to children's cartoons. On the other hand, parents' actual limitation of children's exposure to these two programs was almost the same, and fewer parents thought their child had experienced fear from television news than from children's cartoons. One possible reason for this inconsistency is that although television news is more violent in the view of an adult, children's cartoons are more attractive to young children and easier for young children to understand, so children's cartoons have the potential to elicit more responses of all types, including fear, from young children.

Finally, it is of interest that parents matched their levels of concern about the effects of television news on children with their behavior. Parents with the highest levels of concern were most likely to monitor their children's television news viewing most often. Moreover, a majority of parents agreed that special child-oriented television news programs would be appropriate and they would support a television news violence rating system. Whether this level of support is shared broadly enough to lead to social action and social change is a question for future research.

The findings of this study have practical implications both for parents and television news producers. First of all, as parents of young children, it would be necessary for them to be aware of potential effect of TVNV on their children. Since appropriate actions to address the effects of TVNV on children, such as rating system

on television news as on other media, are not available currently, parents have to shoulder all responsibility to prevent the potential negative effect of TVNV on young children. The findings of this study would be helpful for parents to carry on such responsibility. The results reveal that parental attitude and behavior are associated with the children's exposure to television news and their fear reactions, so parents should examine their parental behavior regarding their children's television news viewing, such as whether to co-view television news with their children or to set up rules for their children on their television news viewing, and how to react to children's response to television news, and so forth. Also, the list of children's fear reactions used in the questionnaire of this study might give parents a clue about to which behavior they should pay attention. Furthermore, parents should think about the necessity and possibility to advocate for effective prevention, such as rating systems on television news, or television news tailored for children.

As one part of "television culture," television news is believed to have the ability to define the world. Specifically the results of this study revealed the effect of television news on young children. It seems that it is time for television news producers to think about their social responsibility. For example, in several European countries, most notably in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, television news producers have produced television news programs designed specifically to make the main news comprehensible to children viewers. One of the main goals of such programs is to prevent children from experiencing too much fear or upset when watching television news. These news programs usually attract a lot of child viewers and in general are well understood and recalled (Walma van der Molen & Vries, 2003).

Finally, since this study is one of the first attempts to examine the fear

reactions of young children to TVNV, it is important to discuss the limitations of the current study and inspiration for future study. The first limitation is about the sample. The sample is small and not representative of the whole population in terms of the demographic characteristics in this country. The results must be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size of this study. For example, parents' education level was noticed to associate with children's television news viewing and fear reaction, but no statistical significance relationship has been obtained. It is reasonable to assume that such a relationship may actually exist; and only because of the small size of the sample, did we not reach it. It is also obvious that the sample is not representative. For example, the sample was highly educated and included too few participants with middle-class income. Future research should recruit more participants to form a more representative sample. However, the result of this non-representative sample would be also useful for further work to assess the effect of TVNV on young children with a more diverse sample of parents.

Another limitation is about the measurement of this study. This study collected parents' observation of their children to analyze children's reaction to television news. Although doing so allowed the researcher to avoid the problems caused by children's lack of language skill, it may also leave a gap between parents observation and children's real feeling. For example, parents may not be aware of children's reaction, including fear; parents may misunderstand, misperceive, or misinterpret children's reactions. Such a gap will directly affect the validity of the measurement. Future research should interview children themselves to enrich our knowledge and validate the result of this study. Limited by the resources, this study applied a questionnaire to collect information. Since what is studied is the feeling of children, a questionnaire may not be the most helpful approach to obtain the first-hand information. So further

studies could choose alternative approaches, such as videotaping children's reactions to television news programs and talking with them about the videotapes

Another limitation in the method is that "violence" was not defined in the questionnaire. As a result, "television news violence" may have multiple meanings to different participants, which would also reduce the validity of the measurement.

Not only should future researchers make efforts to overcome the limitations mentioned above, they should also incorporate more perspectives to allow us to gain a full understanding of the effect of TVNV on young children. For example, as with the other developmental characteristics, individual differences among children, such as their temperament or personality traits, also may influence the children's reaction to TVNV. Another example is that patterns of television news viewing may not be tied directly to children's reaction.

Taken together, the results of this study highlight the need to examine the negative effect of TVNV on young children. The results call for continued concern and future work by academic researchers, television producers, and parents of young children, acting alone and in concert with one another.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

FORM A

IRB # _____

Certification for Exemption from IRB Review for Research Involving Human Subjects

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(s) and/or CO-PI(s): (For student projects, list both the student and the advisor.)

Lin Wang, Dr. Greer Fox, Dr. Mary Jane Moran, Dr. Jo Lynn Cunningham

B. DEPARTMENT:

Child and Family Study

C. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF PI(s) and CO-PI(s):

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Dr. Cunningham: jcunning@utk.edu, 865-974-2163

D. TITLE OF PROJECT:

Parents' understanding of the fear reaction of the children to the violence in television news

E. EXTERNAL FUNDING AGENCY AND ID NUMBER (if applicable):

F. GRANT SUBMISSION DEADLINE (if applicable):

G. STARTING DATE: (NO RESEARCH MAY BE INITIATED UNTIL CERTIFICATION IS GRANTED.) January 24

H. ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE (Include all aspects of research and final write-up.):
March 28

I. RESEARCH PROJECT:

1. **Objective(s) of Project** (Use additional page, if needed.):
The goal of this paper is to get a picture of children's reaction, especially fear reaction, to the violence in television news observed by their parents, and to examine the influence of parents on such reaction.
2. **Subjects** (Use additional page, if needed.):
About 50 parents of 4- to 5-year-old children will be selected as subjects of this paper. They will be selected from the CDL and some other child care centers in Knoxville community.

What they need to do is to take several minutes at home to fill in the questionnaires.

3. **Methods or Procedures** (Use additional page, if needed.):

Anonymous questionnaires are going to be used to collect data for this paper. Because this study involves the use of a questionnaire that asks relatively simple questions about parents' observation of their children and their attitude, no risks to participants are foreseen for participation in this study. The information in this study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to investigators of this study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link the participants to the study.

4. **CATEGORY(s) FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH PER 45 CFR 46** (see reverse side for categories): 2

J. CERTIFICATION: The research described herein is in compliance with 45 CFR 46.101(b) and presents subjects with no more than minimal risk as defined by applicable regulations.

Principal

Investigator _____
Name Signature Date

Student Advisor _____
Name Signature Date

Dept. Review

Comm.Chair _____
Name Signature Date

APPROVED:

Dept. Head _____
Name Signature Date

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for this Study

(The television news programs here refer to regularly scheduled local and national news programs.)

1. To what extent do you agree that the television news programs are violent?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. How concerned are you about violence in television news?

Never thought	Not at all	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned
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3. Compared to children's cartoons on television, would you say that television news is:

- more violent than children's cartoon
- as violent as children's cartoon
- less violent than children's cartoon
- I don't know

4. How concerned are you about young children's exposure to the following television news content?

Sports violence

Never thought	Not at all	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned
---------------	------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------

Crime violence

Never thought	Not at all	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned
---------------	------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------

Political views

Never thought	Not at all	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned
---------------	------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------

Bad language

Never thought	Not at all	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned
---------------	------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------

Suffering of others

Never thought	Not at all	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned
---------------	------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------

Alternative values

Never	Not at all	Not very	Concerned	Very
-------	------------	----------	-----------	------

	thought		concerned		concerned
Others (specify)	<hr/>				
	Never thought	Not at all	Not very concerned	Concerned	Very concerned

5. To what extent do you agree that parents should monitor their young children's *television news* viewing?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	------------	-------	----------------

6. To what extent do you agree that parents should monitor their young children's *cartoon* viewing?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	------------	-------	----------------

7. To what extent do you agree that there should be some way, such as a rating system on television news just like other media, to help you monitor what your young child watches on television news?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	------------	-------	----------------

8. To what extent do you agree that there should be children's news program on television that could serve child viewers better than adults' television news programs?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	------------	-------	----------------

9. To what extent do you agree that *television news* programs may make young children fearful?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	------------	-------	----------------

10. To what extend do you agree that *child's cartoon* may make young children fearful?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
-------------------	----------	------------	-------	----------------

11. Do you limit your young child's viewing of *television news*?

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

12. Do you limit your young child's viewing of *children's cartoon*?

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

13. How often did your young child watch television news in the last month?

not at all	only once or twice
average once per week	average twice per week
average three to four times per week	almost every day

(If you choose “not at all” or “only once or two” in the last question, please skip the following two questions.)

14. About how much of each news broadcast does your child watch?

Small part of it	Half part of it	Most part of it	All news program
------------------	-----------------	-----------------	------------------

15. Please specify the reasons that make television news available to your young child (please check all that apply).

☐ the television is always on
☐ parents or other adults are watching television news when your child is with them
☐ siblings are watching television news when your child is with them
☐ the television news programs attract your child
☐ Others (specified)

16. When did your young child usually watch television news (please check all that apply)?

<input type="checkbox"/> Morning television news programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Evening news programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekend programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (specified)

17. How frequently has your young child been frightened or upset after watching television news?

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

18. Have you ever observed any reaction of your young child to television news program, please circle those reactions in the following list.

Crying

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

Scream

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

Upset

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

Fearful

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

Nightmare

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

Ask questions

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

Return to thumb-sucking

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

Others(specify) _____

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

19. How frequently has your young child been frightened or upset after watching children's cartoon?

Never	Once in a while	A few times	Often	Very often
-------	-----------------	-------------	-------	------------

20. What is your sex?

Female

Male

21. What is your age? _____

22. What is your race? (Multiple answers possible)

White

Black, African American, or Negro

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Spanish / Hispanic / Latino

Others (Specify) _____

23. How old was your child on his/her last birthday?

less than four

four to five

five or more

24. Does your young child live in:

both parents household

single parents household

others (specify) _____

25. How many siblings does your young child live with?

none

one

two

three

more than three

26. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

0-8 years

Some high school

High school diploma or the equivalent (GED)

Associate degree

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctorate degree (Ph. D. or Ed. D.)

Professional degree (MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD, DD)

27. Would you please tell me the letter below that best represents your total household income in (year) before taxes? This should include wages and salaries, net income from business or farm, pensions, dividends, interest, rent, and any other money income received by all members of the household.

Less than \$5,000	\$5,000-\$9,999
\$10,000-\$14,999	\$15,000-\$19,999
\$20,000-\$29,999	\$30,000-\$39,999
\$40,000-\$49,999	\$50,000-\$59,999
\$60,000-\$79,999	\$80,000-\$99,999
\$100,000 and over	

VITA

Lin Wang was born in Chengdu, China on August 9, 1972. She was raised in Chengdu. She went to Renmin University in Beijing, China, in 1990 and received a B.A. in economics in 1994. From there, she went to the Graduate School of the People's Bank of China and received a M.A. in economics in 1997.

Lin is currently pursuing her master in child and family study at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.